



# Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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## Summer '09 Week 12 of 13

Harvest list is online

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### Fall Subscriptions Update

We have now opened subscriptions to the Invitation List (formerly Wait List) and new contracts and payments are coming in fast.

So fast in fact that the Tuesday pickup is almost full and is likely to fill up any minute now.

The Friday pickup still has plenty of room at the time of writing.

### Don't Let the Turkeys Get You Down ... Go Visit Them

Mark your calendars. On Saturday, September 19, CSA members can join us on a field trip to Josh's Foraging Fowl farm near Willcox.

Josh supplies us with pasture-raised turkeys, chickens, eggs, and grass-fed beef.

Look for trip details in upcoming newsletter editions.



### Newsletter Editors

Kimi Eisele & Philippe Waterinckx

## LONGING FOR A CHEMICAL-FREE FOOD SYSTEM

by CSA member Tania Messina

(*Excerpted from a longer essay available online at [www.tucsoncsa.org](http://www.tucsoncsa.org) under Links > Media*)

In today's world of agribusiness, factory farms, excessive obesity and rampant disease, I am at the same time amused and outraged at the ongoing debate on the pros and cons of organic vs. non-organic food. I can't help but wonder what on earth has happened to plain old common sense—our bodies were made to function very well on a variety of foods in their natural state ... not to ingest man-made chemicals.

Recently, I was shopping at a favorite market where I had discovered a reasonably priced organic wine that had the extra bonus of not having sulfites added to the wine. This is another one of those ongoing debates. Wine store proprietors don't like to talk about it, because over 99% of their bottles have sulfites added. They slough off the controversy saying that the minute amount is inconsequential, while the other side argues that there is a difference between a chemical additive and a natural by-product. Unsuccessful in finding the wine, I asked a helpful employee. While helping me search for it, she remarked with certainty that additive-free wines were obviously the wave of the future, because, for instance, this food market couldn't keep up with the demand. As our conversation went on to encompass the whole gamut of chemical additives to foods, the common interest we had found was abruptly interrupted by another employee opening boxes of wine.

"Interesting that we're afraid of chemicals when our bodies are composed of chemicals," he remarked snidely, looking away from us while continuing his work.

"But I'd rather it be Mother Nature's chemicals than those produced synthetically in a laboratory by a chemical company for profit at my expense," I responded.

Driving home without my wine because it was out by popular demand, I wondered incredulously what it is about human nature that so often causes us to actually work against our own self-interest.

The words of biologist Rachel Carson, author of the ground-breaking book, *Silent Spring* (1962), seem even more relevant today than they were 45 years ago: "Man's attitude toward nature is today critically important simply because we have now acquired a fateful power to alter and destroy nature. But man is a part of nature and his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself." Working against our own self-interest? While the addition of sulfites to wine may not be the most pressing issue at stake today, the point is, why must everything we ingest be tampered with?

While many shoppers read labels and buy organic in hopes of avoiding as many synthetic substances as possible, there are always those who argue that the research supporting organic food is inconclusive. As the battle rages on between the pros and the cons of food safety, we owe it to ourselves to choose rather than to wait for years of research, which, unfortunately, is often funded by companies with their own interest at stake.

At the end of the day, I, for one, like knowing that the pot of vegetable soup I made contains as many of the life giving properties as possible that are inherent to various vegetables rather than a witch's brew of mysterious synthetic substances that are ultimately responsible for innumerable health problems.



### **Pear and Pecan Pasta**

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

A salad topped with pears, pecans and blue cheese is becoming ubiquitous on restaurant menus across the country. Try this variation served over pasta for a heartier dish. If you can get your hands on fresh arugula or spinach, it would be delicious tossed in at the last minute.

1 basket Asian pears, cored and slivered  
3/4 cup pecans, chopped  
About 1/2 cup blue cheese  
1 onion, thinly sliced  
1 package penne pasta, cooked al dente  
1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar  
Salt and pepper, to taste

Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until well browned. Toss hot, freshly cooked pasta with onions, pecans, pears and cheese. Drizzle with oil and vinegar and add salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot or as a cold pasta salad.

### **Ideas for Pre-Cooked Potatoes**

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

With a surplus of potatoes, it is nice to have some precooked for easy use throughout the week. This expands your options when you are trying to come up with quick meals after a long day.

Simply cook whole potatoes in a large pot of boiling water until tender when pierced by a fork. Drain and let potatoes cool before putting in a freezer bag or Tupperware for storage in the refrigerator.

Editor's note: I use pre-cooked potatoes all the time to sauté.

### **Potato Tacos - new**

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

These are really nice garnished with shredded cabbage or lettuce, slices of cucumber and onion. Use roasted chiles if you have them, if not add some red chile flakes for flavor. Making the tortillas is a kind of delicate operation, be patient and don't be frustrated if your first couple end up a bit ugly – they'll still taste fine.

About 1 1/2 cups cooked potatoes, lightly mashed  
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
Salt and pepper to taste  
2-4 roasted chiles, peeled, seeded and diced  
About 8 corn tortillas  
2-4 tablespoons vegetable oil  
Salsa and garnish for tacos

Mix together potatoes, chiles, cumin, garlic and salt and pepper. In a heavy skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of oil over medium heat. Place one tortilla into oil and flip after one or two seconds (this makes the tortilla pliable enough to fold in half without breaking). Place 1 heaping tablespoon of potato mixture on the half of the tortilla closest to you. Gently fold the other half over the filling, towards you. Press the tortilla closed for a few seconds to seal, then move the taco to one side to make room for more tacos. Repeat with remaining tortillas. Add more oil as needed to keep skillet covered in a thin layer. Flip tacos when beginning to brown on bottom side. When cooked on both sides, place on an old newspaper to drain.

### **Potato Pancakes with Corn**

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

The best texture for the potatoes in this dish is just lightly mashed, but you can use creamy mashed potato leftovers as well. For a tasty surprise, you can stuff the potato patties with cheese before you cook them, making sure to seal the cheese inside the patties before frying.

Corn from one cob, cooked  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
2 cups cooked potatoes, lightly mashed  
About 2 tablespoons oil  
Flour to prevent sticking  
Salt and pepper to taste

Mix potatoes, garlic, corn and salt and pepper to taste. Form potato mixture into small patties and press both sides into a bowl of flour to coat. Heat the oil in a skillet. Cook patties over medium high heat until browned on both sides, about 3-4 minutes per side.

### **Fresh Refrigerator Pickles**

Wendy McCrady, Tucson CSA member

Here's an easy way to use your cucumbers. They are so tasty you'll be eating them straight from the jar. Chop them up for potato salad, too.

6 cups sliced cucumber, peeled if skin is tough  
1 cup sliced onion  
2 cups white vinegar  
3 cups sugar  
1 and 1/2 tablespoons salt  
2 teaspoons pickling spice  
1 teaspoon celery seeds  
1 teaspoon mustard seed

Heat vinegar, sugar, salt, and spices, stirring until sugar dissolves. Boil about 10 minutes. Sterilize jars and lids with boiling water. Fill jars with cucumber and onion slices. Carefully pour in vinegar mixture. Store in refrigerator. These will keep for several months. Note: strain leftover vinegar liquid and mix with olive oil for a flavorful salad dressing.